

Annex to Memorandum to Records Management Branch, 31 October 1952

Review of Draft Basic File Manual, prepared by: Records Management
& Distribution Branch, General Services, August 1952

I. PROCEDURES

This section and those that follow, seem to be too exclusively concerned with problems of correspondence. As a matter of fact, correspondence occupies less than half of the physical files of this Office. The bulk consists of memoranda, minutes, diaries, staff-studies, and statements of policy, problems, determinations, etc. Our files, in short, are largely composed of "top level administrative, program and planning records" (p.3). More guidance as to the disposition of such records and less concentration on "correspondence" would be of great help.

Page 5

In Paragraph III A there is the suggestion that a Subject File "shall be maintained for a definite filing period of one year" at the end of which period" the existing Subject File will be closed and new folders prepared." This seems too inflexible and should be broadened to allow for subject-by-subject determination. In fact, provision for flexibility might well be included throughout the proposed manual in order to permit users proper latitude in solving their problems.

Page 10

In Paragraph IV B (3) (e), it is recommended that persons responsible for classifying and filing records should study the organizational and functional structure of the Agency. This laudable recommendation should be expanded to include study of the "organizational and functional structure" of the Federal Government, particular those Departments, Agencies and components with which CIA customarily deals. In an office, such as that of the DD/I, such study should also include the "organizational and functional structure" of those components of Allied Governments with which CIA frequently deals. It is precisely as a result of such study in this Office, that the present system of filing material in the DD/I Office is based on the organization of the Federal Government and CIA in relation to the DD/I. While such a filing system is not, in terms, based on a "Subject List," experience to date has shown that, given the large amount of program and planning material involved, it is a more satisfactory way to file than would be the use of a "Subject List."

Pages 15-19

Paragraph VIII proposes an elaborate method for the recording and routing of incoming communications. It would appear to be a suitable

Security Information
- 2 -

method of control for a commercial institution lacking other methods of control. The Agency, however, is required to control documents in a variety of ways well established at the present time. Much of this control is based on security regulations. Other aspects of present controls involve the functioning of the message center and cable secretariat. This section of the proposed manual should be reviewed and revised in the light of the existing controls mentioned above. The superimposition on our present system of controls of such an elaborate system as that recited in paragraph VIII would, at best, require the addition of considerable document-control personnel and, at worst, would unduly complicate a system already heavily burdened with necessary controls. In particular sub-paragraph F of VIII should be re-studied in the light of present cable control procedures.

II. SUBJECT LIST

This large preliminary draft is recognized to be but a preliminary approach. As drafted, however, it indicates the difficulty which can be expected to arise whenever an Office such as that of the DD/I might attempt to organize its files on the basis of a "Subject List." In particular, the following subject divisions should be reviewed:

COOPERATION -- The manual states "This subject pertains to policies, procedures and agreements concerning liaison with Individuals, States, Foreign Governments, Federal Agencies or Organizations." The use of such a subject file would necessitate a complete duplication of much material filed at present according to organizational components (i.e. Foreign Governments, Federal Agencies, Intra-Agency Organizations, etc.). Considering the statutory duties of the Director under the National Security Act of 1947 and the functions and missions of his subordinates as set forth in CIA Regulation 70, it is apparent that a vast amount of the daily work of this Agency can be categorized as "cooperation," or, as it is more usually termed, coordination.

INFORMATION -- This subject, as outlined, would seem proper for the PRO functions of many institutions. It is, however, a misleading category for use in filing material processed by an Agency whose ultimate purpose is to produce intelligence. Further study as to the difference between "information" and "intelligence" would seem advisable. In this connection, the library code developed by OCD may have real utility in the case of Research Offices and their task of properly filing "information" and "intelligence."

NATIONAL DEFENSE -- It is difficult to see how this subject, which is defined as "pertaining to the Agency's activities and contributions to the National Defense Program, except Intelligence Operations," would encompass much material. The real problem is to develop a suitable means for filing the very material excepted under this subject, namely, "Intelligence Operations."

- 3 -

ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT -- Subdivision 6 of this proposed subject concerns "Programs and Plans" which is further explained as "General Only. Do not use this subject for material that can be classified under more specific subjects." It is this category of subject into which much of the recorded business of the O/DD/I properly falls. It will be necessary for this office to develop a proper method for filing such material, but it is not believed that it can be usefully filed in bulk in a subject file entitled "Programs and Plans."

III. INDEX

Most of the statements made above apply equally to the index. For example, the present entry "policies" must, in this office, be considerably expanded, as must the entries "plans" and "programs and plans." No doubt a careful study of the present Index to CIA Regulations would aide in creating a file Index more suitable for use in an agency component than either the index presently used or one borrowed from commercial concerns or other departments of the Government.

RDD
31 October 1952